

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Community Leaders in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania
September 18, 1995

First of all, let me say to all of you how much I appreciate your taking the time to come here and discuss this with me today. To all who have spoken, I appreciate the kind remarks you had about the efforts of the administration.

I think the time and effort we have put in on this is not so much rooted in the political party I happen to belong to as the fact that I happen to have been a Governor for a dozen years, and I have closed defense bases. And I have also worked for a decade on trying to restructure the economy of a State that was devastated in the first big recession of the early eighties. And if you look at the challenge to America of creating jobs and raising incomes that we faced here in 1993, when I became President, it is obvious that—it was obvious to me then; it's more obvious to me now—that general policies that may generate an enormous amount of economic opportunity will still leave great pockets of problems, rooted primarily in America today in two things: one is the general distress of isolated urban and rural areas, and second and to the point here, the aggravated impact in some areas of the defense cutbacks in terms of base closings and the defense contracts being cut.

So in 1993, we developed a plan to try to accelerate the rate by which we could turn over these facilities to localities so we could begin more quickly to generate jobs. And then, in 1994, we gave, I think, some of the property here at the Philadelphia Naval Yard. And now what I'm interested in doing is finding out what the remaining problems are, what I can do to accelerate it.

I do believe that we have, as the mayor said, committed over \$100 million to this project. That's not counting the approximately \$170 million in loan guarantees we were prepared to come forward with through NARAD if this shipbuilding project goes forward. I think that is an appropriate thing for our country to do for a naval yard that built and repaired ships for this country throughout virtually its entire history and for the workers who have given their entire lives to this work.

I would like to emphasize that we have also had a very strong interest in maintaining and enhancing the shipbuilding capacity of the United States. I believe that the international economics have changed on that. I think we have opportunities we simply did not have 10 years ago. I have seen, because of our efforts and also because of the international market and because of the increasing productivity of American workers, I have seen a major facility saved in southern California; I have seen new contracts from around the world come to the Gulf Coast and to the Atlantic Coast. And so, again, I think that this project is really worth pressing.

I think trying to maintain these kinds of jobs for the people here is not an unrealistic expectation in the world as it exists today and the future as far as we can foresee it. So I would encourage you to do that.

One last thing I'd like to say is that we really want to help you do what you want to do. My strong belief is that the Federal Government works best, in economic areas and quite often in social policy, when we are giving help, giving encouragement, being a partner, but the ultimate decisions are being made by people at the grassroots level.

I just visited a part of Philadelphia that's in your empowerment zone today, and the same philosophy for me holds there. In our education reforms we've tried to do that. Tomorrow, Governor, we're going to announce the next round of grants for the school-to-work project, which is developing training programs for people who don't go to 4-year colleges. And Pennsylvania will get about \$6.5 million in that. Again, projects designed by Pennsylvanians for your State, not something that somebody in Washington decided that you ought to be doing.

I also would like to say a special word of thanks to Dr. Singerman for leaving the Ben Franklin Partnership and coming to work for us. Now, if you don't like what we're doing, you can blame him instead of me. *[Laughter]* And you can literally say that he knows better—*[laughter]*—because of his long experience with you. We thank you.

And the last thing I'd like to say is, again, I want to say a special word of thanks to the Members of Congress here and to you, Senator Specter, for the work you have done to try to give us a chance to develop a bipartisan economic policy, to get the people in this country through the economic transition period that we now see underway.

And lastly, let me just say there can be light at the end of the tunnel. I was in northern California a few days ago. There is an airbase there that was closed—an Army base—a few years ago that now has far more employees than it did on the day that it closed. We are on the verge of doing that in three or four other places—and the same or higher quality jobs, not just more jobs.

We can do this here, and we can do it more quickly if we can figure out how to serve you better and, obviously, if we could get one big project early, a magnet project. All these big developments always work better if you can get somebody to anchor it early.

So I want to be there; I want to help. And I thank you for all that you've done so far. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:23 p.m. at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Phillip A. Singerman, nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development.

Remarks at a Fundraiser in Philadelphia *September 18, 1995*

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here tonight and for all your support. I want to thank, obviously, Tom Leonard and Ken Jarin and Alan Kessler and Bill Batoff and Lynn Barrick and everyone else who worked so hard on this. Mr. Mayor, we're delighted to be back in your city. I thank my good friends from Pittsburgh for being here and from throughout the State, the State legislators and others, and of course, the four distinguished Members of the House of Representatives who are here, without whom a lot of the accomplishments the Vice President just reeled off would not have occurred.

I'd also like to say a special word of thanks to two Pennsylvanians—one of who is here and one of whom is not—to my good friend Harris Wofford for helping me to give birth to national service and for now, his willingness to lead the fight to preserve national service and to increase it; and to Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky for her wonderful leadership in Beijing, China. I thank you.

I came up here, and the Vice President had just concluded and introduced me. I said, "Al, whatever I say now, I'm going to be behind. Why don't you just keep on talking; it sounds pretty good." I'd forgotten we did half the stuff he talked about.

I say that only half in jest. You know, when I asked Al Gore to become the nominee for Vice President on our Democratic ticket, I did it after we had a long set of talks, and we agreed that we were going into an uncertain time when we had to make difficult decisions rooted in what was best for the United States over a 10- or a 20- or a 30-year period, that might not be popular in the short run, that might not even be able to be easily explained in the short run. We knew that.

And we and our wonderful spouses made a commitment to an administration that would always look toward the future, that would always embrace new ideas, that would have the highest standards of excellence, but most important of all, would seek to find common ground in the things we all believe in: the preservation of the American dream, bringing Americans together around work and responsibility and family and community, leading the world into a new era of peace and prosperity, and giving our children the opportunity to have a better future in the 21st century. And I am very grateful for that.

One of the reasons I like dealing with people like your mayor is that they're open to new ideas and to changing things. And thanks to the Vice President, we've done a lot of those things he talked about. It may take 10 more